

Sept. 10, '76.

Dear Dr. Mahalaxmi,

I still did not answer your last two letters.

You wrote that you still believe in an impermanent self. You think kamma, volition is self, though not a permanent self. You wrote, "one of the ten perfections (the Buddha accumulated) is adhiṭṭhāna or determination which is made by an impermanent self. To enter the stream (sot'anna mag'ga) a directed consciousness is necessary. This direction on the part of the individual does not arise entirely due to conditions coming from past accumulations. If that was so no enlightenment would be possible."

An impermanent self is a contradiction in terminis. Your remarks make me think of Satī the fisherman. Middle Length Sayings, Greater Discourse on the Description of craving, Mahātaṭṭhapaṇṇāsaṅkhaṇḍika-sutta). Satī, so the commentary says, was a repeater of the 'Jātakas', the birth-stories of the Buddha. He had the wrong understanding of the Jātakas so repeated, he thought that consciousness travels from life to life. He thought that citta had no condition for arising. The Buddha said that every citta has a condition through which it arises, and showed that seeing has conditions totally different from the condition for hearing, thinking, etc. Citta is anattā, cetasika is anattā, rūpa is anattā, volition is anattā. Determination is a cetasika arising with the citta, it arises and falls away immediately. Volition is a cetasika, arising with the citta and at every moment there is another volition arising with citta. What has fallen away is completely gone, cannot be recovered. But there are accumulations of kusala and akusala, and these are passed on from one citta to the next citta. That is why we can say that the present develops from the past. That is why accumulated kamma can produce vipāka later on.

The Buddha said once that neither the same person nor another person is reborn, because he wanted to show that the past conditions the present. He has taught the Middle Way. If we cling to a self though impermanent, we go way off the middle way.

The conditions for enlightenment are several: also past accumulations, but also knowing the Dhamma from the right person, considering it, practicing it.

Your drawing of molecules I do not understand since I know nothing about this subject. I think it confusing to make comparisons with science and prefer to consider the Dhamma as an entirely different subject.

must be directed, otherwise nothing could happen? You cannot stand the idea that there is no self? You would feel lost, hopeless?

It is this clinging, because clinging it is, which blinds us, hinders the development of good states of mind.

When you do a good deed, there is not only volition, there is also *adhimokkha*, decision, there is *kusala viriya* (energy), there is *sati*, all kinds of *cetasikas* cooperate with the *kusala citta* so that the *kusala citta* can carry out its work. Those *cetasikas* are conditioned by the *citta* they accompany, and they condition one another. They fall away immediately together with the *citta*. *Citta* and *cetasikas* are conditions, *dharmas*, *sankhara dhammas*.

Another moment arises another *citta*, this time accompanied by *pañña*, you know that what you are doing is *kusala*. The *pañña* conditions, influences the other *cetasikas* too, they are of a different quality than before, when they were not accompanied by

*pañña*, also volition has at such a moment a different quality. *Another moment volition may accompany kusala citta, which of the many volitions is self?* I gave this example to show how much *cetasika* and thus also volition

is conditioned *dhamma*, not only conditioned by the past, also by factors occurring at the same time (the *sampayutta dhammas* which accompany it). The more we see how very different each moment of *citta* and *sankhara* accompanied by the *cetasikas* is, the less will we think that there must be something 'which exists', a self. The word self implies something important, what exists, a substance. The practice of *vipassana* has as the aim detachment, not clinging. Clinging to self brings sorrow, leads us on to wrong practice. *Moreover, can volition be a 'master' of anything, of the body, of your anger, or your attachment?*

You wrote that when there is a dog barking, the concept of a dog barking does not arise at all. Doesn't *sañña* remember? I think that would be unnatural. The *nāma* which ~~thinks~~ *experiences* the concept of dog is different from hearing, but I know some people may think that it is wrong to know the *nāma* which experiences a concept, *but it is a reality* (the most important is: one object at a time. This is very difficult. When there is the experience of the concept of a dog, this can be a very quick moment and people are inclined to say: it is not thinking, because I do not think: 'a dog is barking'. Still, the concept is an experience through the mind-door, not through the ear-door. The word thinking may be confusing, since we use it widely for experiences through the mind-door. *The hearing and the experience of the concept have different characteristics, but don't we mix them?*

And then, who is aware? Still a self? Wants to direct?

This is a question we should ask ourselves now and then and it will appear that it was self trying, trying again.

You asked whether one should be aware of all the cittas in the process, successively. " " Some arhats can do it, not all. If we think we can do it, it is merely thinking of Abhidhamma, not sati which arises and is aware of any, any object which appears, then falls away immediately. It is good and useful to admit to ourselves now and then that our practice was mostly thinking, not awareness. It is so very it happens. I once wrote to someone that we all are like babies, we have to start learning. I like this baby-attitude, I feel if I think I know a lot, paññā cannot develop at all. If awareness goes so smooth, so easy, it is better to examine ourselves whether there is clinging to a self which directs. Considering the kilesa we all have accumulated, it is normal that we make ourselves believe that we know a lot, that everything is just nāma and rūpa, only nāma and rūpa in the world. Sound is known as sound, hearing as hearing, no problem. If we more carefully look we will find that paññā has not yet been developed at all. It knows characteristics very, very precisely and briefly. ... at such a moment. Detachment from the self. ... if I ...

You had a question about the heart, whether it is an anatomical heart. No, Abhidhamma is a psychological science and the exact place we cannot know, well, citta has no physical base. It is written about it, but is this important? It is a kind of rūpa, physical place of origin of many cittas, but not all. You wonder why seeing does not arise there, but at the eye-base. You add, there is only one citta (nāma) at a time, why do not all cittas arise at the heart-base. I do not understand your problem. Seeing is a moment, it arises at the eye-base, it is succeeded by sampaticcāya-citta which arises at the heart-base. This is the problem. You add then a question about awareness (of nāma arising at the heart-base) of for example seeing (arising at the eye-base) at exactly the same moment. <sup>seeing occurs</sup> This is not possible. Only one citta at a time. One citta knows another citta, but one of course the citta which is known has arisen and fallen away already, just fallen away. I have the impression you still think so much of the time something arises, instead of being aware of characteristics which appear, no naming of them, not trying to time them. Sometimes sound, maybe then a long time nothing, later on may be visible object, then maybe thinking, no order of realization and not especially when you sit before the Buddha image. How can you direct sati? Impossible. ... as indirect experience of rūpa? It experiences ... in the characteristic ...